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A woman tries to maintain these qualities as she well knows that they form the center of attraction to a man and that maternity steadily destroys them. This may be one of the reasons for the increasing use of birth control, for which they take herbs that do not allow them to conceive, abortives of all kinds, and they take advantage of their knowledge of their periods of sterility and avoid sexual intercourse at other than these periods.

Their facial features are of no great importance to them so long as they conform to the anthropological norms of the group. They prefer a face with large, dark eyes and beautiful, healthy teeth. Also, they are especially attracted by the whiteness of the skin as it indicates social standing because it is a sign that the woman is better able to look after herself by protecting herself from the sun of the region. During her /62/ seclusion the girl does not expose herself to the sunlight, and her greatest pride is that her skin has become whiter. Every morning she bathes with water left out previously in the evening dew, which besides having magic effects has the property of whitening the skin, and when she goes visiting she always covers her face with facial paints -- a customary practice required by etiquette, which also protects her from the sun's rays. During her seclusion the girl also complies with other beautifying and magic practices, such as denying herself certain meat like deer meat or animal udder, since this last, for example, will wrinkle her rapidly and she will lose some of her physical attractiveness.

A woman is well aware that her future married life will be affected in great measure by her preserving an agreeable appearance and that if the man does not feel satisfied she will be relegated to second place, and he will acquire another woman. For this reason she continually struggles to benefit by all known means to recapture her husband and retain him and avoid his acquiring other women. This is the reason that the mother, when her daughter is in the hammock ready to be hoisted up during her initiation, places on her a love charm which has the property of attracting men and of which we spoke in a previous chapter.

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548 177 Consequences. The consequences that prostitution has brought to Guajiro society are various: The first and decisive one is the almost absolute wreck of the social organization due to the destruction of marriage, the mainstay of social life based on the purchase of a woman, who by this transaction becomes the private property of the man in the matrimonial sense. If she is unfaithful there arise the claim for compensation payment and the whole series of consequences which we have seen previously, all tending to preserve conjugal fidelity. On the woman's turning to prostitution, the legal norms which establish that marriage payment and the very constitution of the family become useless as it erases the essential character of the family: i.e., procreation. There is an end to the principle of the establishment of new social cells and fecundation takes second place. It is the biological satisfaction that is sought, not the procreation of children, a phenomenon which constitutes a grave social problem for, although many people accept contraceptives, others through ignorance or thoughtlessness on the part of the man do not use them, and the natural consequences of pregnancy are not long delayed. Then they have recourse to all the abortives they know of empirically, using the herbs whose active qualities are claimed by the old women of the Sierra de Macuira, or those they have traditionally learned from their ancestors, or they ask the assistance of a woman practiced in these matters, who for a fee provokes the abortion by traumatic massage on the abdomen of the pregnant woman and keeps the secret.

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848 Besides abortives, the Guajiro woman uses potions of herbs which sterilize her for a time, up to three years, without stopping menstruation, and others which interrupt the menstrual cycle for long periods with the result that her sexual relations do not lead to pregnancy. She even appeals to magic to get this result, for example, by drinking, while fasting, a potion made from mule's excrement left to soak overnight and then decanted. They believe that as this animal is sterile so will the woman who imbibes the preparation.

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carrying out his function as community curer, and witch so that he will be able to act with certainty in curing illnesses, in the propitiation of the rainfall indispensable for good harvests, as well as in his tasks of keeping away pestilences and epidemics which could decimate the people under his care.

As has been seen in the section treating the period of training, this is limited first of all to transmitting to the new shaman the most successful way of insuring that the spirit can reach him. His science in no manner implies that he possess knowledge relating to the medicinal value of plants, of animals, etc., but it does imply that the process of apprenticeship, or better said his science, [18] is based on the successful invocation of the spirit, which has the true wisdom, which is the only curer in reality, the all-powerful able to propitiate rain and cast out pestilences and epidemics and whose science is manifested through the medium of the medicine man whenever the spirit wishes to carry out its designs. The shaman by himself and for himself is worthless. He is an ordinary man, subject as are others to the evil influences of the spirits of sickness and death. His fundamental value rests in the absorption into himself of a powerful spirit which places him on a footing of equality with the spirits of the other world, and in many cases even on a superior one, when it enables him frequently to emerge triumphant in the cure of sickness.

One has to emphasize in the personality of the Guajiro shaman the fact that he has almost exclusively the function of making contact with the supernatural world, and it is by this means that he endeavors to effect the cure of his patients. He is partially or totally ignorant of medicine based on herbs, animals, parts of animals, or any other type of cure other than that exercised directly by the protector spirits that use him as their intermediary.

As will be seen in the corresponding chapters, the majority of child cures are effected by female diviners with the indicated methods, which are based on what is called participative or contaminant magic. Also, the herbs actually very few – which are used to cause abortion, to restrict the growth of the fetus,

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to bring on lactation, to gain weight, etc., are partly public knowledge and partly privately known by a few families who traditionally preserve the secret of their use for their personal benefit.

By what has been previously stated we see how the ceremony of healing is a perpetual invocation of the spirit, a continual fear that it might withdraw its aid for whatever motive, and a perennial anxiety to satisfy its slightest wish in order to obtain the success sought. To give evidence for this we shall see how the Guajiro shaman effects a cure when he has been called in to handle one.

First of all, before he initiates such activities, he demands a gift. For this reason whenever a native needs the services of the shaman for magico-medical attention for some relative, he goes to present himself to the shaman with a gold necklace or some other valuable present.

Each time the shaman goes to cure a sick person he takes with him two maracas. This custom is rather widespread in South America, where the magic power of the maraca appears to be extraordinary and is commonly accepted, although with some variations from tribe to tribe whether in the [19] quality of its different parts, in the artifacts adornment, in the manner of using it, etc. To corroborate this it is sufficient to quote Professor Métraux again, who says, in reference to the apprentice shaman: "During his initiation the novice learns to make use of the accessories indispensable to the magic art. The most important of all, that which in some manner symbolizes the profession is the maraca or rattle made from a calabash containing some seeds or pebbles and provided with a handle." (15) [Cited in French.]

15. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 217.

The medicine man accommodates himself in a seat especially reserved for such occasions and carved in wood in the form of an animal, but if such an artifact is lacking, he will use any convenient seat. The custom of using a seat of this type is also found in the Guianas. "The wooden seat is an equally indispensable accessory for the shaman of the Guianas. It is often carved in the form of a jaguar, an animal that plays an important part in the